THE COMIC READER #37

May [illegible]

[illegible] OF THE ACADEMY OF [illegible] BOOK FANS AND COLLECTORS
PUBLISHED [illegible]

[illegible]

For the past year I've enjoyed publishing TCR. Perhaps the greatest pleasure is publishing [illegible] words. The [illegible] have been [illegible] with; the [illegible] reason that [illegible] I will discontinue publication of TCR after the September issue, #41. Please, no orders beyond #41.

For the past month I've considered this announcement very carefully, and due to the amount of work connected with publishing a monthly newsletter I [illegible] to admit I'm not able to continue beyond September. Frankly, I want a rest. I do not plan to become inactive in fandom, but I can't keep abreast with my other activities. My files are in sad condition. Five fanzines accumulated during my Christmas vacation, and numerous letters to old friends have been neglected. Besides this, there are three or four articles that were started six to nine months ago which I haven't had time to work on.

I'm afraid that if I continue at the present rate, I'd soon become fed up with it all and become inactive all together. I might like to edit and publish TCR after a 9 mos. rest. Presently recording and typing [illegible] for future issues has taken up more time than I can afford. I had hoped that more fans would have sent addressed envelopes, but not many have.

* *

Proposal to Subscribers

This item concerns especially supporting members of the Academy. More than half of the subscribers of TCR are supporting members who pay only 20¢ per issue. It is practically impossible to mail TCR at 15¢ postage as I did with #28 and 32. I had an abundance of late material for #36 and almost considered making this another large issue which would cost 15¢ to mail, but after considering what I'd be losing, I decided against it. Paul Gambaccini's analysis of the 1964 Alley Awards was sent for #36, but because I had already printed most of #36, it was impossible to add this also. It would have been included if all subscribers had paid 25¢ for TCR. I'd like to suggest that supporting members also pay 25¢ for TCR. If this were done TCR could be larger some issues and the postage would not hurt the editor. Let me know how you feel about this. I know that those now paying 25¢ are in favor, but I'd like to hear from the supporting members.

THE COMIC READER is published and edited monthly by Glen D. Johnson. TCR is a non-profit amateur fanzine published for the enjoyment of comic fans.

POLICY: The price for one issue is 25¢, or four issues for one dollar. Supporting members of the Academy may receive TCR for 20¢ an issue, or five issues for one dollar, but must send coupon #1. Subscribers will not receive their fifth issue unless I receive coupon #1. Please send no more than $1.00 as I'm not accepting subscriptions beyond #41. If more than $1.00 is sent, 5¢ will be used to return the balance. ADVERTISING IN TCR is $1.50 for half page ads, and $3.00 for full page ads. No ads accepted until I confirm the issue it is to appear in. Only half page ads will be accepted for other fanzines - No full page ads. BACK ISSUES: #28 is still available at 25¢, 35¢ mint. TCR #26 is incomplete and is yours for a S. A. E. with a 5¢ stamp. Extra pages of TCR #32, 34, 35, and 36 are available for a stamped S.A.E. Don't put more than 15¢ on your envelope. YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES when "Sub Ex" or "last issue". appears on your envelope or label. Contributors who subscribe to TCR, please send an addressed envelope for your free issue to avoid confusion. MANILA ENVELOPES: If you wish TCR mailed in a large manila envelope, you must send these and add 5¢ in stamp to each. If you care to have TCR mailed in a nine inch business envelope, please feel free to send these.

TO TELL THE TRUTH, popular TV panel show will play host very soon to Bill Placzek, concerning his comic collection.

COUPONS. For the many inquiries regarding the value of certain coupons, I will try to have Paul Gambaccini give a complete listing next issue.

NEWS SOURCES: Richard Backler, Jeff Gelb, Bill Placzek, Barry Brooks, Steve Johnson, Jon Swartz, E. Nelson Bridwell, Murray Boltinoff, Jerry Bails, Richard Weingroff, John Stanley, Andrew Fraknoi, Stan Dracy, Ron Fradkin, Larry Walczak, Bob Churchill, Kim Weston, Brian Yates, Pat Masulli. The winner for this month's news prize goes to Bob Churchill.

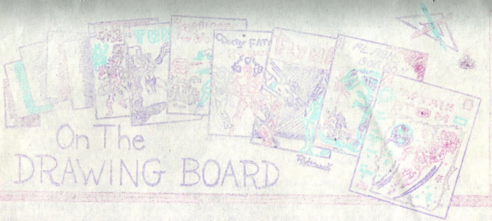
THE CAPTAIN MARVEL SHOWING II by Bill Placzek

Captain Marvel finally came to town on April 17, 1964, after a three month wait, which was eternally forgotten after seeing Capt. Billy whizzing down in first chapter. The serial helped set the scene for the homecoming of our filming fury, master of movie-making, Don Glut, who is home for Easter vacation. Of course, he was in charge of everything, so that no other adult blunderer would ruin this showing as he did the first one. (It was mentioned in TCR #33.) // Some of the fans who attended were Keith (Bob) Greene & Bob Butts from South Bend, and the Chicago group, Ross Knight, John Guzlowski, Don Glut, Bob Milewski, Dick Anderson, Larry Charet, Doug Murch, Frank Solyomi, Frank Esigngrüber, Bob Greenburg, Bob Otootle, Ben Solon, Eddie Naverette, Phil Addams, Alex Almaraz and Ethan Young. // Much was said but not very much done at this meet. Ross Knight managed to get up a candy fight with John Guzlowski, and we were gifted with a pro for the first time in a large group(Ross, John, Don and I were the only ones who had met him before), He was Bill Ditchl, he did background work on Captain Comet. // Alex Almaraz showed some Tales of the Unexpected artwork that cost him a small fortune. He kept on saying he got it from the artist but asked to identify the work, he couldn't tell the style. // The movies fantastic achievements in flying scenes helped all enjoy it better and almost all were well satisfied at the two buck ticket of greatness Don's projector had brought us.

CONTRIBUTORS: Dick Ayers, Bill Placzek, Paul Gambaccini, Robert Jennings, Paul Rybarazyk.

Special thanks to Kent Russell for sending Dick Ayers original drawing of the Human Torch. The Human Torch copyrighted by the Marvel Comic Group.

ROBERT JENNINGS has agreed to continue the fanzine review since Jeremy Barry cannot. Since I want #37 mailed this week-end, Jeremy's last review might not arrive in time. If it does not, it will be in the following issue. Bob will start doing zine reviews with #39. Bob has informed me that he doesn't buy many fanzines, so if you wish your fanzine reviewed in TCR, it is strongly advised that you send Bob an issue for reviewing purposes. Bob's address is 3619 Chambers Drive, Nashville, Tenn. 37211 Those interested in back issues of the COMIC WORLD, send Bob a s.a.e. for issues still available.



On The DRAWING BOARD

CHARLTON. Both KONGA and GORGO have been permanently discontinued.

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA. Don't look for any JLA heroes on the August JLA cover. It features five JSA members - Flash, Atom, G.L., Dr. Fate and Mr. Terrific. The September cover shows Dr. Fate slugging it out with a villainous Superman. "Watch for the return of morality plays to JLA comics".

SUB-MARINER. Since Namor gained his own strip in T.T.A., I asked Stan Lee of his chances of becoming a member of the AVENGERS, and Stan replied that there was no such plans presently. Oh well, maybe in a few months.

SUPER REPRINTS. Simon & Kirby's Bullseye was featured in Blazing Sixguns #17. DOLLMAN #17 features two foes who've teamed up; the Undertaker and Tom Thumb. Master Detective #17 features two Young King Cole stories. DANGER #16 features Yankee Girl, Young Americas, and Johnny Rebel. Jungle ADVS #7 features Jo-Jo The Jungle King.

DOOM PATROL. In the September issue, #98, which goes on sale 7/15, there will be another Bob Brown rendition of THE DOOM PATROL. The title of the story: "60 Sinister Seconds." In this issue, there will be a piece run about "TCR" and the 1964 Alley Awards, with mention of Jerry Bails and myself.

SUPERMAN & family. The "Beast Boy" story in ADVENTURE will be delayed a few issues because of scheduling changes. The Batman story will be in the August LOIS LANE. Beginning with the September issue of WORLD'S FINEST, the Surprise Feature will be replaced by the Editors' Round Table. Each issue, a DC editor will select a story from the past issues of his mags. "Olsen's Greatest Scoops" is the theme of the August 80-PAGE GIANT, featuring, of course, Jimmy Olsen. The September issue stars Lois Lane.

HAWKMAN. The September HAWKMAN brings back the Matter Master and features a brief, but important appearance by the Atom. The November issue brings back the evil Caw organization.

BRAVE & BOLD. The first Starman-Black Canary shot in B & B will have two full page texts, which E. Nelson Bridwell has written, recounting the origins of the Astral Avenger and the Blond Bombshell. They'll feature reproductions of their first cover appearances on ADVENTURE and FLASH. This recounting of their origins will be a neat trick, since neither really had origin stories as such. There will also be a second issue of this team.

WONDER WOMAN. Ever wish you could see a Wonder Woman issue written and drawn in the style of the '40's? Then don't miss the August issue. Ross Andru has done an excellent job of copying Harry Peters style.

The M.M.M.S. is coming out with some interesting things. (1) T-shirts of the Marvel characters, and a free gift with each order (2) Marvel stationery; paper, envelopes, etc. (3) a 6 ft. high pin-up of Spider-Man.

F.F.ANNUAL #3 looks very interesting as it features the F.F. against I don't know how-many super villains.

CAPT. AMERICA. While doing the "Origin of Captain America" for TALES OF SUSPENSE #63, Jack Kirby used the original art and comic, it's almost an exact copy except for using a serum instead of a hypodermic needle. Watch for more photo's in the future, one scheduled for T.O.S. The new AVENGERS change has been well received.

PHANTOM and FLASH GORDON models are now on sale.

COOL IT, BABY. BATMAN'S BACK. This was the title of a short article that appeared in The Boston Globe of April 16. It described the popularity of the 1940 Batman movie serials being shown at the Brattle Square Theater in Harvard Square in Cambridge, Mass. It seems that the Gotham Gumshoe has become pop art. One confusing point about the article was its statement that pop art nuts collect posters of Superman but can't get any of Batman due to the publishers' disapproval.

ASSORTED NEWS: Ray Bradbury has a collection of Tarzan, Flash Gordon, and Prince Valiant strips from the late 20's and 30's. Al Feldstein, the MAD editor was interviewed on CBS radio's "Weekend Dimension", and discussed the problems of producing a satire magazine in a country which doesn't like to be "disturbed" and mentioned some of the complaints he has gotten, mainly from the Right Wing. The Pittsburg Press, The San Francisco Chronicle, the Brockton Daily Enterprise, the N.Y. Post and many other papers carried an article about Bill Placzek having $40,000 dollars worth of comics.

The New York Times, Monday, March 27 carried an article "Radio Mysteries of Past Recalled" Old radio shows such as the Shadow, Lone Ranger, the Green Hornet, etc. were mentioned. Other news items relating to comics and material were in: N.Y. Times (Nov. [illegible], '64) - article on a N.Y. City bookstore which sells old comics at sky-high prices and why there is such a demand for them. N.Y. Times (Jan. 30, '65) - article on high profits NPP made during the past year--the upsurge of interest in comics--the Academy--Jerry Bails--has photo of first issues of ACTION, SUPERMAN, BATMAN and FLASH. N.Y. Times (all MARCH Sunday issues) - ad for 52"x32" reproductions of panels from Prince Valiant, Mandrake, Phantom and Flash Gordon for $3.98ea N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE Jan. 24, '65 mentions Batman and comics.

RETRACTION. It has been pointed out that the New York Con held last summer was not "regional". The con was never intended to be regional, and I understand fans from different parts of the country were there.

LIFE. On page 22 of LIFE (March 26), an advertisement for Sealy Posturepedic Mattress depicts a boy laying on a mattress reading an Adventure Comics, while another DC title (unidentified but nevertheless a DC comic) lies on the floor. Watch Life magazine for an article by Al Capp.

NEW YORK TIMES, Saturday, April 24, 1965, contained a review of The Monocle Peep Show. This book of political satire contains several "justly famous" articles which appeared in the magazine, Monocle. One is: "'Captain Melanin' the comic strip story of little Billy Bootblack who turns himself into a Negro Captain Marvel by shouting, not 'Shazam', but 'Booker T. Washington' and 'Modern Jazz Quartet'." Having seen Monocle on one or two occasions, I expect this to be pretty funny -- have to get it.

WBAL, featured an interview with a western comic fan who reported has a comic collection valued at $40,000. They had a few questions -- he answered one saying he wouldn't sell his collection.

SPECIAL BULLETIN released by Pat Masulli, editor of the Charlton Comic Group."New writers and artists have to come from some place. What better place is there than from among the avid readers and lovers of the field itself."

All right fans...you said you could do it...now's the time...Over the past year I have been besieged with pleas from you would-be-comic writers. Dozens of you have claimed to have talent and New Ideas. You said that all you needed was a chance. Our overworked staff writers just haven't the time to turn out our entire production. This means that we have room for new blood. As an offer exclusive to all you FANZINE readers and writers I make the following proposal: (1) write a 20 page script for EITHER "Blue Beetle"..."Son of Vulcan"..."Captain Atom". (Only one to a writer!) (2) Scripts must be typewritten and in any one of the accepted forms. (If any of you do not know what these forms are, get a book of plays from your library and write it like a play.) (3) Do not ask for any criticism or comments. In all fairness, you must understand that I simply do not have the time to write to all contributors. (4) CODE RULES MUST BE FOLLOWED! Anybody can write an adventure tale with sadism and gore...but we can't use it. If you don't know what the code rules are send for them. Comic Code Authority: 300 Park Avenue South: New York, N.Y. (5) If we can use your script we will contact you and discuss terms. (6) All scripts will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed self-stamped envelope. I suggest you keep a carbon because we cannot be responsible for lost manuscripts.

Well, there it is. A comic first. If you're willing to follow the six conditions listed above, we are ready to give you a chance! Hurry because the first three really good writers will get the assignments.

Good luck,

Pat Masulli
Executive Editor

FRED HARMAN, artist and creator of RED RYDER is holding an exhibition of paintings at the JAMISON GALLERIES in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It is being held April 25 - May 15, 1965.

SPIDER-MAN. Spidey battles the Molten Man in #28. Peter Parker finally graduates from high school. #29 features a return of the Scorpion. SPIDERMAN ANNUAL #2 will feature a 20 page story in which Spidey teams up with Dr. Strange to battle a black magic menace. The rest of the issue will have pin-ups and reprints. Two villains Spider-Man will be fighting against in the future will be Meteor Man and the Octopus. Two different stories.

KIRBY/DITKO. It may be an interesting fact to know that Jack Kirby does 20 pages a week, while Steve Ditko does 30 pages a month.

X-MEN. A reliable source in the past has sent the following item. "I heard a strong rumor that Al Toth has left D.C. and will soon be doing the X-Men."

THOR ANNUAL. The Thor annual will deal with a long tale of our hero fighting Hercules. An upcoming Thor Story has him fighting the Destroyer, the only one able to kill one of the gods.

MORE E.C. REPRINTS COMING. I've been notified that Ballantine Books will put out THE VAULT OF HORROR.

NBC will release a James Bond radio series instead of re-releasing Shadow and Green Hornet radio serials. The first one will be 52 episodes long.

CHARLTON ART. Pat Masulli will sell original art for $25 a page to qualified collectors only. (What is a qualified collector?)

The following comics are for sale. Key to condition-Mint (M), Very Good (V), Good (G), Fair (F), Poor (P), No Cover (NC), Page Missing (PM). Please send cash or money order. Add 25¢ to all orders under $3, to cover postage and handling.
BATMAN-29(G) $2.00, 34(V) $2.00 6(V) Bid. DETECTIVE-59(M) $5.00, 82(G) $3.00, 94 (G) $2.50, 98(V) $2.50. 103(V) $2.00, 105(G) $2.00, 106(V) $2.00, 149(V) $1.50, 153(V) $1.50, 167(G) $1.00, 27(V) Bid. WORLD'S FINEST-8(V) $6.00, 4(V) Bid, 26(V) $3.00, 30(G) $3.00, 38(G) $2.00, 39(V) $2.00, 39(V) $2.00, 40(G) $2.00. SUPERMAN-2(V) Bid, 56(V) $1.50. CAPTAIN MARVEL-42(V) $1.00. BOY-4(V) Iron Jaw-Bid, 15(V) Iron Jaw V Rodent-Bid. CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.-4(M)-Bid. WHIZ-33(V) Contains Captain Marvel and Spy Smasher togther-Bid. WHIZ-51(G), 59(F), 61,66,70,79,84,90,96(all Mint) @ $2.00 each, 105,107,115,117,127,142, 155 (all Mint) @ $1.50 each. PLANET-19(V-NC), 55 thru 73 (all Mint) $2.00 each. CRACK-34 thru 59(Most Mint)@$2.00 each. HIT-36,37,51,53,54,55 (Mint) @$2.00 each. KID ETERNITY -2,8,10(Mint) @$2.00 each. NATIONAL-34,35,37,38 thru 69 (Most Mint) @$2.00 each. SMASH -44 thru 84(M) @$2.00 each. FEATURE-80 thru 136 (all M) @$2.00 each. POLICE-49,50,62, 70 thru 87 (all M) $2.00 each. DOLL-MAN-10 thru 46 (Mint) @ $2.00 ea. PLASTIC MAN-9 thru 63 (all Mint) $2.00 ea. TORCHY-3,4,6,(all Mint) @$1.00 ea. THE BARKER-2,4,9,12 (all Mint) @$1.00 ea. TIP-TOP-95 thru 132 (all M) @$2.00 ea. JUMBO-69,71 thru 103 (all M) @$2.00 ea. ACE COMICS (containing Price Valiant, Jungle Jim, Phantom)-61,68,69,70,73, 78 (all are in "like new" condition...@ $3.00 ea.

WANTED---WANTED---WANTED

I'm interested in Mint or near Mint condition copies of the following comics: DETECTIVE-28,29,31,36,37,38,156. FLASH-1. DAREDAVIL-4,7 (Lev Gleason). WALT DISNEY-1. MARVEL MYSTERY-1 thru 10. CAPTAIN AMERICA-33,75. CAPTAIN MARVEL-1,2,4,9,10,11. MASTER-21. FLASH GORDON (FOUR COLOR)-10. PRINCE VALIANT (FEATURE BOOK)-26. JUMBO-2. POLICE-1 thru 10. CRACK-1 thru 30. HIT-1 thru 20. SMASH-1 thru 30. ALL STAR-1 thru 5. ACE COMICS-29,33,35,37,47,104,110,114,118,120,121,122,124,126,127,131 and 134. WORLD'S FINEST-41,46, 48,51,52,56,61,62,66 and 68.

FOR TRADE ONLY!!!!!

Most of the follwing comics are in Mint condition and I will trade them for my wants. However, if you see an issue that takes your eye--and you fell lucky--make me an offer. AMAZING MYSTERY FUNNIES Vol 2,No.10, AMAZING MAN-12, FEATURE-13,16,37,58, PEP-13,23,34, 36,37,52,53, 55 thru 64, TOP-NOTCH-1,19,30,32,34,35,41,43. BLUE RIBBON-16. CRACK-1, 4,12,13,14,18,19,21,22,29. JACKPOT-1,2,7. TIP-TOP-4,46,47,49,51,56,78,80. COMICS ON PARADE-11. SILVER STREAK-5,14. JUMBO-1,10,25,26,27,28,51,52,54,62. FLIGHT-1,15,16,17, 21,27. ALL-STAR #18. FAMOUS FUNNIES-9,10,12,27,82,89,96,100,119,123,124,130 thru 137, 147,151,152,157 thru 186,216 and 211. CATMAN-1,30. ALL-AMERICAN-65,72,75,101. ALL-FLASH-1. LEADING-11,12,14. GREEN LANTERN-15,17. MORE FUN-7,8,102,105,106,113, 117. WONDERWORLD-12. GREEN HORNET-42,45,47. ALL-WINNERS-1,2,3,4,5,19,20. WOW-8,10,41,44,48, 49,56 thru 58,64. POPULAR-18,79,83,84,105,106,108. CLUE Vol.1 #4 & 8. STEVE CANYON-1 thru #6. TERRY & THE PIRATES-3,4,6,8,9,13.

RICK L. DURELL, (APT.G) 424 WEST IMPERIAL AVENUE, EL SEGUNDO, CALIFORNIA 90245

The following is from Russ Manning, artist of Korak, Magnus, and Brothers of the Spear. "Thanks very much for the indication of your interest in the way I make a living, and your regard for the results. It's great to know that our best efforts are appreciated;even though your appreciation means that we're inspired to put even more time and effort into each panel, with attendent economic disaster! My personal congratulation to all those who put the care and ability into their creations that resulted in awards, both fan and pro. I certainly agree that all richly deserved your awards, though you were overkind to me."

* *

REMINDER: Don't order TCR beyond #41. If you prefer TCR be put in large envelopes, you must send the envelopes addressed with a 5¢ stamp.

* *

THE ACADEMY OF COMIC-BOOK FANS AND COLLECTORS'

1964 ALLEY AWARDS

REPORT

I believe it is Professor A. Toynbee who has become world-famous for his "pendulum theory" of history---that is, the events in the course of history turn out to be extreme trneds that swing from one extreme to another, finally settling down into a middle course that contains all.

Any fan who offers a "pendulum theory of the Alley Polls" won't be laughed at, at least not for now---for in the course of four years, from the first Alley Poll in 1961 to the latest 1964 version, the pendulum has swung from the singling out of Julius Schwartz' line of DC comics to the overwhelming selection of Stan Lee's comic group as the best comicdom has to offer fans. (Nevertheless, the pendulum has yet to settle down to the middle---nearly all of the awards were carried off by super-hero comics, so "all minds of thought" haven't been accepted by fans voting in the Poll---yet.) Lee's Marvel group walked off---nay, ran away---with eleven pro awards, as compared to four for the nearest competing company.

It was truly a MARVELous year in the opinion of the Academy's members. The acknowledged head of the Marvel group, Stan Lee stole the show again with his selections as Best Editor and Best Writer of comic books. This double-feat, unprecedented except for Lee himself last year, earns him a Golden Alley trophy---which the Academy hopes to present to Stan at the New York City Comicon this summer. Now, Stan, how can you resist THAT invitation?

Winning the designation of "Best Pencil Artist" for the fourth consecutive year was Carmine Infatino, the star in the DC sky. You can't avoid realizing that the fans are crying for more of Carmine's great art, and even though he physically can't be able to do too much more, the fact that he continues to be singled out and praised in the Alley Award manner is a true testimonial to his talent. It should be pointed out, however, that Carmine has been gradually losing ground over the past few years. This year, he beat out Russ Manning of Gold Key's MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER, by only 3% of the vote. Manning leaped to second place from fourth last year, and is definitely a threat to Carmine's Golden Alley monopoly.

The 1964 poll saw the reintroduction of a category that had been dropped last year---"Best Inking Artist." The selection of Murphy Anderson, who got nearly half of the votes for all five candidates himself, comes as no surprise to followers of previous Alley Polls. "Murph" was second in last year's "Best Artist" category only to Infantino, and he naturally seemed to be the pick of the crop when the Inking category was reintroduced. Years of creeping up the list of popularity have finally paid off for Murphy, who is extremely well-known for his work in the past on nearly all of DC's Julius Schwartz comics.

DC took two other awards, too---or should we say three? WONDER WOMAN, perennial "Worst Comic," got 46% of all votes in this category. Since this was a write-in, with no guidelines whatsoever for fans to go by, the selection is nearly incredible. Obviously, reputation and infamy had something to do with this pick. It should be pointed out that when the category has been known as "Worst Comic," the Amazon has been overwhelmingly selected---but when it is known as "Needing Improve-

ment," a fandom favorite of a year or two ago from the poll's date that since fell downward in quality won the award(Batman and Justice League in 1962 and 1963, respectively). Evidently, fans consider WONDER WOMAN beyond recovery.

Fandom's favorite comic book, for the second consecutive year, is SPIDERMAN, Stan Lee's brainchild. Stan may call FANTASTIC FOUR "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine"(and notice he doesn't any more!), but SPIDERMAN continues to grow in popularity. In 1962, Spiderman's origin story was deemed the best short---last year, he got his own magazine, narrowly beating out the FF for the Best Comic choice---and the runaway this year in the "Best Adventure hero comic book" category marks the climax of a three-year rise unparalled in fandom history. Spiderman also swept the Best Giant and Best Hero categories---indidating that Stan and Steve Ditko really have a hot property on their hands---one that was probably alone responsible for bringing Steve Ditko into the honorable mention ranks of comicdom's talents for the first time.(Steve was selected as third best inking artist.)

Fans have often come under attack for their favoring of "sacred cows"---their sacred cows being stars of the 40's brought back into the world of the 60's. The first-year appearances of HAWKMAN and JUSTICE SOCIETY both saw the old favorites winning recent awards against the objections of a few fans that the selections were made on sentimental popularity instead of quality. Regardless of what they were made on, the 1964 poll is another case in hand. Captain America, the Timely star of the 1940's, returned to Stan Lee's comics last January in AVENGERS #4---and the magazine won an Alley Award for the best book-length novel. Cap himself swept the Best New Book or Strip category, and came in second to SPIDERMAN in the Best Hero category. These results should at least convince Stan Lee that fans are clamoring for more star treatment of the freedom fighter.

Speaking of runaway victories, the biggest runaway of all came when SGT. FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS took the "Best miscellaneous fiction" department with 65% of the votes. This was an even bigger margin than last year's tremendous 62%-of-the-vote smonch. Obviously, this "war" comic has tremendous appeal to fans who apparently go for superhero comics, much more so than the usual order of war magazines. Fans may make their own conclusions regarding the contents of SGT. FURY!

For the first time in the history of the poll, the "Revival Desired" category met with hardly-even-lukewarm response. The results, totally predictable, really showed that fans are still insistent in their demands that the Spectre and Dr. Fate be given their own strips in the modern comic medium. Despite DC's insistence that they cannot and will not revive the SPECTRE because of difficulties with the nature of the character in the modern comic world, fans have voted SPECTRE "Strip most desired for revival" for the second straight time(last year, he was eliminated from consideration since DC had stated they could not revive him. He was put into the allowable selections again this year because of rising fan demand and the recent revival of the JSA itself.) it was eligible. The traditional runners-up, Dr. Fate, Dr. Mid-Nite, and Captain Marvel, all came in the top 5 again. Even the Justice Society, which had been revived the year before, got votes. Apparently fans want it made clear to editor Schwartz that they'd like more of this formerly starring group.

The two referendum categories in the poll were nearly unanimously decided, as about 90% of the voters opposed word balloons on the cover as detracting from artistic quality. However, they were divided nearly 50-50 on the problem of painted covers versus drawn covers. Evidently, both types have followers.

In the fandom section of the poll, fandom's old reliables came through in fine style, and the battle for the Silver Alley trophy turned out to be between two former winners of the award---Roy Thomas and Biljo White. Both gentlemen won two awards, in past years, including the Silver Alleys, with Roy winning an additional designation in 1962 for his two-year BLA series in ALTER-EGO. This year, the two of them accounted for eight Alley nominations. Both of them fared so well in the voting that making a choice between either of them for the Silver Alley would be grossly unfair to the other. So the two Missourians will have to be content with the trophy that will be presented to both of them in the name of ALTER-EGO, the top-quality fanzine on which both of them share editorial tasks.

For the first time in the history of the poll, a pro won an amateur division. Otto Binder's "Adam Link" was judged the Best Fan Comic Strip. However, credit here also goes the Bill Spicer and D. Bruce Berry, who both did excellent jobs on the Alley-winning effort. Bill adapted the tale, while Bruce illustrated it for FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #1,2, both of which were also named outstanding top-3 fanzines.

One of the most astounding results of the poll was that of the "Best Fan Project" division, wherein last year's Academy Executive Secretary, Jerry Bails, took the first three places for his Academy projects---the WHO'S WHO, the Alley Poll, and the Microfilm Library. All of these highly-rated efforts are being continued this year, with a new WHO'S WHO slated.

Criticism both in favor and against the poll was, as expected, heavy. However, the general reaction seemed to be that the Poll was well-handled. Nevertheless, there were quite a few questions raised that will have to be considered by the time next year's poll comes around. Therefore, I heartily suggest you take pen in hand and write the Executive Secretary concerning these matters.

(1) Should there be divisions for newspaper strips? This motion merits special consideration when one considers that the proposed name change of the Academy to "Comic Art F & C" seems to be destined for success. Under this name, all aspects of comic art should be considered---or should they?

(2) Fans were pretty unanimous in urging reinstatement of the Best Fan Writer and B est Fan Artist categories. They were omitted this year.

(3)The suggestion has been raised that pros who will Alleys year-after-year should be presented certificates instead of trophies. Comment on this one is appreciated.

(4) Should the write-in categories be abolished?

(5) Should the same project be allowed to be nominated two years in a row?

(6)Perhaps the most serious criticism leveled against the poll is that it is limited in scope and size of voting. The scope---that is, the material considered in pro divisions---cannot be helped, as super-hero material continues to be nominated over all else. However, the number of voters CAN be increased, say many fans, by putting it into another fanzine with wider circulation, such as THE ROCKET'S BLAST. It should be pointed out in consideration of this aspect that approximately 200 fans voted in this year's poll. This was nearly the circulation of THE COMIC READER at the time, which has since mushroomed to 350. Nevertheless, the question is---should the poll be put in RB, with its circulation of about 800? In any case, it would still be an Academy project.

Fans are reminded that the Executive Board served as nominators and that fan divisions were rated on a 1-to-5 scale. —Paul Gambaccini

ON THE LINE ---

a regular column devoted to discussions of comics and co-fandom.

THE NEW LOOK IS KILLING BATMAN

by Robert Jennings

A few months ago a change occurred at D.C. Hammered by continually dropping sales, disturbed by the lack of qualified writers, and the slow drop in art production as dependable artists drifted into other areas, D.C. played a long shot, and made some editorial changes. Jack Schiff, who had been editing the Batman series for almost a decade was pulled and put on other books. The new vacancy was filled by Julius Schwartz, whose editorial work on the new heroes had made them fantastic successes. And along with Schwartz came his two overworked star writers, Gardner Fox and James Broome to beef up the depleted Batman bull pen, and to supplement the gapping holes in the art staff, Carmine Infantino was brought in to do Batman every other issue with Bob Kane, creator and lifetime artist for the series,doing the other stories. Joe Giella was to handle the inks for both men. The change in background staff was to result in some changes in the hero, all aimed of course at bringing him back into the winner's circle. It was collectively dubbed the "New Look" and it broke like a bomb shell.

The editorial changes and the flurry of brilliant, eye catching covers, combined with the different style art inside the comics created another shift rather soon , a shift in circulation. Readers who only short months before, would never have given Batman a second look now began to pick up the comic. The circulation rise was slow at first, but it was steady, and gradually the profit line on D.C.'s index charts has been growing higher and higher. Co-fandom as a whole was delighted with the new shift, and gave it an unqualified seal of approval. The only rub, it would seem, is with Batman himself.

There is no doubt that Jack Schiff did not do well with the Batman. Schiff has often remarked that so far as he is concerned comics are mainly educational devices,and one presumes he treats his comics with this view always in the back of his mind. Not of course, that the deterioration of Batman can be laid completely on Schiff's doorstep. The last days under the editorship of Whitney Ellsworth, before he left to represent the company out in Hollywood, were nothing to brag about. But with Schiff the deterioration of Batman began in such total and all engulfing earnest that most fans are more willing to place full blame on his shoulders. And there is much truth in this condemnation.

It is a fairly well established fact that continued characters operate on success spirals. They either start big, then gradually deteriorate, to be suddenly reborn in a blaze of glory at some sordid low point, or else they are fortunate enough to start small, build to a tremendous peak of quality and popularity, then settle slowly toward the bottom again. All characters experience such shifts, and whether one discusses the Shadow or Superman, Conan or Captain America, the same rules apply, and they all undergo these natural strains and adjustments. Batman has, of course, been no exception to the rule, but on the whole he has been luckier than most. He started slow in a poorly written, badly drawn six page adventure in DETECTIVE 27, and then, almost overnight he became a top selling character with thousands of devoted fans and a fantastic run of top stories and art. His popularity carried him triumphantly thru the forties, he survived the attack of horror comics and their counter reaction by outraged local citizens in the fifties, and only in the mid fifties did he seem to be running into trouble.

The danger signs began appearing as early as 1954, but by 1956 it was evident that the patient was ill, and feeling the need of a remedy, the doting patient called in a

con't. next page

[illegible] physician who assured them that all would be well in no time. But the physician [illegible] [illegible] to take [illegible] of this particular [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] ter, doubted seriously that he would ever recover. He was exposed to a host of fantastic costumed villains, his body was [illegible] to [illegible] series of [illegible] which gave him [illegible] powers, his stories were fed [illegible] of [illegible], and in the last stages, as a death rattle began to build in his throat, his art was watered; alien invaders sprang upon him, and stories poured forth which did not even attempt to explain their fantastic and logicless development.

So grim was the outlook that at last the doting parents called in a specialist who proceeded to apply his unique methods in hope of bringing on a recovery. Unfortunately a few people, [illegible] [illegible] that the specialist has [illegible] the case and that the cure he is currently applying is perhaps worse than the illness itself.

The first thing the specialist did was to make some trivial changes in the costume. On the whole this was a good move. [illegible] the utility belt, and inscribing the circle on his chest made the costume look more modern, and are the type of touches which should have been applied some years before.

Other changes, however, were not so welcome. The first sign of [illegible] [illegible] was revealed to the world when the "New Look" Batman ventured thru the pages of DETECTIVE COMICS and traced a criminal [illegible] hidden beneath Gotham City's "old village". The hero battered his opponents into submission, and then, before the horrified eyes of criminal and reader alike, Batman picked up a fallen automatic pistol, and held it on the [illegible] ing thugs, with every intention of using it if they made anymore trouble.

With this single act an era crashed to a thundering close. The sound must have echoed like the voice of doom thru the [illegible] rooms of the Bat era. For almost all his life the Batman shunned firearms of any kind. It is true that in his days as an infant comic creation and before his ideal [illegible] principles had settled, he did use guns. But within a few months his dedication to [illegible] principles and his thirst for justice had crystalized, and he swore he would never touch a firearm in his work. He believes, as a great many people do now, that the use of firearms by any person, no matter for what reason, will only result in [illegible] tragedy, [illegible] and he refused to acknowledge their [illegible] in any of his stories. He walked the streets of his beloved Gotham City and fought for justice armed with his quick wits and strong fists. It was his sincere belief that science and intelligence are more than a match for crime, and he proved it, in issue after thrilling issue. Entire stories, stories which have today become [illegible] classics, were written around Batman's pledge not to use guns, and even tho his life was constantly in danger, even tho his friends implored him to reconsider, he never violated his oath.

And yet with the advent of the "New Look", and on one single comic book page, twenty three years of [illegible] and tradition went [illegible] down the drain. Batman picked up a gun, and he intended to use it if necessary. I cannot help feeling that the person who picked up that weapon is not the same man who [illegible] the pages of DETECTIVE, BATMAN and WORLD'S FINEST in past years. That other man, the real Batman, would never have compromised his sacred principle as this person did with such ease. If the "New Look" is so potent that it can strip a hero of principles he has held [illegible] [illegible] years, then there was something very seriously wrong somewhere.

More disasters awaited the Batman fan as other changes poured forth. The new staff decided to do away with the old Bat [illegible] and installed the "Hot Line". Readers were told that the Bat signal was old fashioned, that it took up too much time, and that it would be much easier for Batman to learn [illegible] [illegible] the hot line. Yet this explanation did not make much sense when one remembers that [illegible] Batman was summoned to action by the [illegible] beam [illegible] he had [illegible] radio [illegible] to direct him to the scene of the action. [illegible]

first call the commissioner, who apparently has nothing better to do than stay awake all night waiting to relay reports of some petty robberies to Batman. The logic of such an arrangement escapes me somehow.

And of course I need not delve into the tremendous loss we older readers felt at the loss of the Bat signal. For years it was a familiar part of the overall emotional appeal against the darkened skies calling forth the midnight avenger to fresh action was a part of the aura of mystery and adventure surrounding the Batman. Now of course that's all gone. Batman no more difficult to reach than your next door neighbor, and has been connected with the authorities by something no more romantic than a commonplace telephone receiver.

Hand in hand with these changes came the advent of the new Batmobile. Logic wise this was one of the most foolish changes the "New Look" staff has produced. The old Batmobile was exactly suited for the Batman and his midnight adventures. It was a sturdy vehicle, heavy enough to hold the road even in the midst of howling storms, strong enough to even forge over oil slicks and gaping potholes. It came equipped with a bullet proof plastic dome, a cutter edge on the nose for battering thru obstacles, and a crime lab and instrument panel that did Batman's scientific genius justice. In place of this rolling juggernaught, we now have a souped up sports car, with no top at all, no crime lab or special equipment, and whose only advantage seems to be that it will save our millionaire hero a few pennies on gas mileage. In addition to this, the car offers such fringe benefits as freezing to death in the open winter air, becoming a perfect target for assassin's bullets, of course, the enormous benefits which could have been reaped from the old crime lab and instruments are gone. If Batman should become involved in a case requiring some sort of scientific work he will have to travel back to the Batcave, losing precious, perhaps vital, hours of time.

The murder of Alfred proved beyond any possible doubt that, so far as the "New Look" staff was concerned, Batman, the hero who had patrolled the night shrouded streets of Gotham City for decades past, was completely banished. There was to be a brand new character to replace him. He wore the same costume as the old hero and he bore the same name, but he no longer had the ideals, the courage, the ability or the dynamic magnetism the other, the true Batman displayed so admirably in all his stories. This new character was to become just another costumed hero, one of dozens, a part of the crowd, with no special abilities or qualities to make his adventures unique and prized. From the masked avenger, the superstitious symbol of justice incarnate in human form, the hero was now to become a quiet, middle class, lack luster style do-gooder.

Better writers than I have already pointed out rather clearly what a mess the "New Look" people made of Alfred's death. The lack of good plotting, or logical story development made the tragedy even more appalling so far as most readers were concerned. The replacement for Batman's faithful friend and butler was to be a pudgy, old fashioned aunt, who cast in a mold which had no business in any sort of heroic comic, and certainly not in stories featuring the Batman. Fortunately for long suffering readers, she has thus far remained an inconspicuous part of the woodwork. One wonders how this person can be so consistently stupid, but apparently she left her brains back at her former residence. She has yet to notice or comment on the mysterious disappearences of Bruce and Dick, nor their extended absences, lasting often for days at a time. This logical inconsistency is, of course quite in keeping with the "New Look" policy. Stories no longer have to be believable to be the only tradition the new staff refuses to trample in the dust.

Certainly, some will argue, the background has suffered considerably from the change. But, they will say, the art and stories are certainly an improvement. This is a good point and there is no doubt in my mind that the art changes on Batman were for the better, at least when viewed in overall prospective. In the last days under Schiff the art was cramped, stunted, until finally the whole picture began to become free and sloppy. The new emphasis on art has done much to tighten up the old backdrops, make them more realistic and uncomplicated once more.

But while Bob Kane and his ghost helpers, along with Carmine Infantino, [illegible] make studious efforts to create better backgrounds, they have lost a quality that the older hero had. As Richard Kyle so clearly pointed out in his recent letter in BATMANIA #3, the Infantino Batman has none of the forceful dynamic appeal inherent in the older character. The old Batman was a masculine figure, a raw, open, heroic character. He had a square jaw and bulging muscles, and when he hit a man you knew he meant business. Infantino's Batman is frailer, thinner. He has no bulging muscles, he walks with a tilt, he has a certain grace in all his actions which make him appear almost feminine. To paraphrase Mr. Kyle, the new Batman "even falls pretty".

And I'm not sure any one who has glanced over the new stories can fail to notice the amazing changes which have occurred in facial expressions. Veteran Batman readers would be hard pressed to recognise their heroes in their alter identity. Bruce Wayne has even developed curly hair in some stories, and in costume, the inability of the new artists to draw the mask and cowl has resulted in a straight up and down square skulled Batman, and ear points that tower two or three inches over the top of his head. Robin's opened mouthed idiotic expressions need no descriptions, I'm sure.

I personally find these bodily and facial changes extremely difficult to stomach, and if the backgrounds are an improvement on the last Schiff days, they do no better when it comes to use of sloppy, washed out color combinations. Undoubtedly a vast bulk of the blame must rest heavily on the shoulders of Joe Giella, who is doing inks for both Kane and Infantino. But whoever is to blame, the fact remains that the "New Look" Batman is artistically superior only when compared to the last days under Schiff. It's lifeless, with no emotional appeal at all. Good art in a distinct, vivid style is the personification of the type of character the Batman was intended to be. The new art is not adapted for or fitted to the Batman.

So far as the stories go, things have not improved greatly. Certainly when compared to the last days under Schiff, the new stories read like classics. Yet, when compared to Schiff's output any kind of readable tale would be an improvement. That grim period was characterized by the absolutely stereotyped plot, when alien invaders, freak inventions, impossible accidents, and illogical coincidences and unexplained fantasies. Batman fought his menace three times only, once to introduce it, once to recover loot, and once to capture it. On this steady diet of poor plots it's no wonder the readership fell to an all time low, and brought about the change in editorial staffs.

But has the "New Look" produced any great changes? A close examination of the "New Look" stories reveals almost exactly the same broad stereotyped pattern lurking behind too many of the current plots. The menace is hardly as ridiculous and unbelievable as he was in the past, and the hero paces with somewhat better art, but the same tune is being played, the only difference is the piper has a different rhythm. The freak accidents, unexplained inventions, incoherent actions and unexplained impossibilities, are still all present in staggering numbers.

If anything, Batman the Freak seems to be on the increase. Exposed to strange rays, battered by unique cosmic accidents, mutilated by alien radiations, Batman is bottled in fresh powers issue after issue, powers which invariably last exactly the length of the story, then disappear as mysteriously as they appeared. The advent of costumed criminal, one of the most depressing aspects of the last Schiff attempts, has not changed. They still lurk within the pulp pages to gush forth their never ending stream of stupidity and ridiculous plotting developments in uncalculable amounts.

Making an objective comparison I find that the "New Look" Batman cannot, in fact even compare favorably with Jack Schiff's efforts when he first took over the mag. His first issues were very poor, when compared to the pre-Schiff Batman, yet stacked up against the New Look they are surprisingly good. I find myself leafing thru those past issues with sighs of nostalgia, for in those days Schiff gave his character believable plots,

variety, good adventure. I doubt that the New Look will ever provide good stories unless some sort of basic change in attitude is effected within the new staff.

Indications are clear that there will be no change in the type of Batman stories. He will continue to battle costumed villains, acquire freak powers, and muddle thru the same old stereotyped plot outlines. He will do all this cheerfully, and without any serious stumbling block simply because this is what every other comic hero in editor Schwartz's line does, issue after dreary issue. There will be no change in story type, no unique plots, nothing to bring a breath of fresh air to smothering readers. Editor and his staff are completely immuned to the majestic emotional appeal the Batman carries. They see him as merely one more in a long line of costumed heroes, and they insist on treating him this way, even if, in the long run, his action will push Batman into limbo.

These new editors and writers and artists have all missed the point. Batman is no costumed comic hero. He is a symbol. And all his equipment, from the Batsignal down to the Batmobile are symbols also, linked with bands stronger than steel to the type of hero he has become over the years. Batman in older days had a sort of unique magnetic appeal that reached out from the comic page and ensnared the readers in the wonderworld of adventure. The villains and criminals he fought had a certain air of fantastic unreality about them. This effect was glorified and magnified to the greatest heights by the unique, weird style of art Kane poured into the comic. The sweeping, simplified grandure of the art matched the symbolic implications of the hero. Batman, the masked champion who swooped across the sprawling metropolis was more than a man; he was an inhuman, mystic figure of supernatural proportions. He was justice who had chosen to appear as in manlike form. The fantastic spurts of creativity which once motivated the hero sent him spiraling into spine tingling adventures beyond the simple understanding of down-to-earth, mundane heroes. Batman was never an ordinary hero, not in any of his deeds, not in his very character. Yet this is what the new editors cannot understand. They are committing the unpardonable sin, for they are changing Batman from a dynamic eerie, almost supernatural figure into an ordinary human being. They are ripping down the vestages of the past, the symbols which lend to and amplify the mystery and majesty of the hero. The "New Look", far from returning Batman to his former glory, are leading him into a trap so powerful that I do not believe he will ever be able to escape unless some changes are made now, before the new shift becomes permanent. Only by returning Batman to the close knit emotional unity he enjoyed in former stories, only by making him seem somehow more than a man with a costume, only by turning Batman back into the type of hero which power and strength made him the second best selling comic at DC, will Batman become once more a popular, profitable creation, one the readers and the producers can look on with pride. But unless the "New Look" staff take the time to investigate their hero, unless they are willing to restore him to his rightful position, unless they are willing to give him dynamic art and emotional magnetism, then the Batman will become a different hero, cut from the mold a dozen others were stamped from. He will disappear into a limbo type story and sloppy art, and when the bubble breaks we will wake up one morning and find that there is no more Batman of any kind.

THE END

* *

BILL HARRIS LEAVES GOLD KEY

Mr. Bill Harris, editor at Gold Key and friend of Fandom, has accepted a new position with the promotion department of the New York Times. This is a great lose to all Comicdom. The Academy of Comic-Book Fans and Collectors wishes to express to Mr. Harris its deep appreciation for the cordiality he has always shown fans and all fans salute him for the high standards that he helped set for the PHANTOM, DOCTOR SOLAR, the TWILIGHT ZONE and the other books that he edited. All the Best to you, Bill, in your new career.

QUOTES FROM THE READERS

Robert E. Griffith
1028 Russell Cave Pike
Lexington, Kentucky

According to your ad in The Comic Reader #35, TCR #28 has twenty two pages, but when you sent me my copy a while back, you only sent 20 pages. Would you please send me the other two pages? Please hurry! ((Yes, Robert, TCR #28 is supposed to have twenty two pages as advertised. Would you care for any two pages from TCR #28, or would you care to specify the two pages that are missing from the copy I sent?))

Jeff Gelb
125 Glen Ellyn Way
Rochester, N.Y.

TCR #36 was enjoyable, but I think it's a bit ridiculous to have a letter column if only two or three people are going to write in. If you get more people to write in, have one; otherwise why waste the space? And besides, how much can one comment on a mag which is just mostly news? ((The reason for the letter column is to discuss controversial issues. Since TCR is a newsletter, and is published monthly, I'm not allowed much time in planning each issue. Most of the time the letter column is longer, but when room won't permit, the letter column is the first thing to go. I do get more than two letters, but many of these are praise letters, and I don't believe the readers are interested in these. It builds up my moral, and I thank those who have written.))

Johnny Chambers
3300 Cherry Avenue
San Jose, Calif.

I want to comment about TCR #36 before 'tis too late so I'll say it like this. Lucky you, art by Steve Ditko--body shot was great, but that face! Ditko didn't draw him like that way back when! Once again we learn of the odd tastes of fandom--Jeddak's 'Nemesis of Evil' placed <u>first</u>!! in the fiction category, yet Jeddak itself placed last. I am very enthused over the high rating of Nemesis, tho, as I'm a personal friend of Paul's and I share his joy. Dubay's Avengers thing was interesting, Marvel fair flows from them like water from the eternal fountain. Quotes seemed a bit small--one page?? I especially enjoyed that guest Comic Mirror section...my compliments to the artist, Howard Keltner. And now to the Open Letter--HOORAY! It's about time someone had the gumption to tell Love off--I've been carrying on a one-man feud against him and his assorted publications for quite some time--haven't bought a single issue of RB-CC in I-don't-know-how-long. I'd like to know just how much he makes, profit wise on his fanzine, or should I use the dictionary definition "a magazine that makes a profit" and call it a pro-zine? I estimate over 20¢ per issue, and that's a very conservative estimate, I think. Let's see how it works out--circulation, say 700, mimeo, fooey, who can figure, it gives me ulcers just to think--over a hundred dollars on the ads alone. ((As for Jeddak's "Nemesis of Evil" winning best Fan Fiction, this was my favorite also. As for not rating better in the fanzine division, I thing that 21 out of all the fanzines published in a year is pretty good. To clear up a misunderstanding, Bill Dubay did the illustration: the short item underneath was mine. Sorry if Quotes was only one page, but that was all the room I could spare. A few fans have asked about page four being blank. It's really the Invisible Girl, which I'd have a hard time proving is given a lie-detector test. What really happened was that I had finished all but four pages of TCR #36, and I was holding these for Paul's Academy News, and two pages of Alley Results. When Paul's material arrived Friday night, he had two pages of Academy News, but the results only covered one page. Since I wanted to mail TCR #36 out Saturday, I didn't have the time to fill the page. Regarding the Open Letter, a good deal of fans seemed so happy to see printed. I'm sorry I did this, but I felt it had to be done. I believe that Gordon Love is doing a great service for fandom publishing a cast of assorted fanzines, but I do think he is asking too much for some of them. RB-CC is a good buy, the only one that is, and no fan should be without it. I hesitated to print the Open Letter, because it was unsigned, and because I've been accused of over charging for TCR. One reason I believe Gordon Love is valuable is because he works at home, and is able to devote a lot of time to his fanzines,

cont next page

but this is no excuse for much higher prices. As long as it has been mentioned, I'd like to give my views of the GOLDEN AGE #1. Sure this is a fine fanzine, but it costs the same as ALTER-EGO, and more than FANTASY ILLUSTRATED, and it isn't in the same league with either. What is the solution? You tell me.))

Steve Johnson
681 Maple Avenue
Indiana, Pa.

I was pretty much interested in the letter to G.B. Love on the last page so I thought I'd comment on it. On the surface it seems the writer has all the facts straight, but if you really analyze the situation more comes to light. First of all, I think G.B is just solvent on RB-CC. Altho the single issue price is 50¢ now he still sells $1.25 subs and I think 2/3 of his readers are subs. The obvious solution is to make up the money lost on other zines. Another reason too (this applies to all zines) tho' as a zine ed myself I try to keep prices as low as I can, the facts must be faced. If you advertise a 60 page zine for 30¢ (and it can be done on ditto, if you're careful) it stands a good chance of flopping. Reason: people think what can you get in 60 pages for 30¢? Must be a crud. This doesn't apply to many fans but since success in today's world depends on appealing to the "new" 500 or so fans and they tend to follow above pattern-or so I've found this is most obvious in short length zines, say 24 pages. If you advertise for 15¢, I just don't think it will sell. For 20¢ you will find better sales.// O yes, a fan deserves to loose money if he sends more than $1.00 without a money order. 20¢ for the order is better than bickering about lost money.// I was a little amused with the Academy news. Who, in his right mind would want to stop display ads? To knock out crudzines??? Aren't readers mature enough to find out themselves. Besides they (!?) will get knocked out soon enough. The set of "Rules" for good zines was equally ridiculous. What is "Good"? Besides John McGeehan let's (us) all know to the closest degree what the Quality is. Who knows? ((I'm sorry Steve, but the Open Letter to G.B. Love did not discuss the RB-CC, but the RB Special #5. As for wanting display ads stopped in RB-CC, I'm afraid you didn't understand the suggestion. I can't recall who it was that suggested this, but he isn't against display ads. He didn't think that artists such as Ronn Foss, Biljo White, etc., should do display ads for other fanzines. I was all for this. I ordered a fanzine advertised in RB-CC because of a very nice looking ad by Ronn. When the zine arrived, I couldn't have read it if I wanted to, and the art looked like something my five year old son could do. I don't know for sure, but maybe the editor did connect my son to do the art.))

Andrew Fraknoi
1950 Andrews Ave.
Bronx, N.Y.

While I heartily agree with the points your unknown correspondent brought forth, unsigned open letters are not the proper means to remedy such situations. He should have written signed letters to both Love and prominent zines. Not signing a letter just indicates a lack of conviction. However, in all fairness, we must realize that Mr. Love has a perfect right to charge as much as he desires for his zines. At the same time, we fans also have a perfect right not to buy a zine that we do not consider worth the price. Thus the way to force Mr. Love to lower his prices is not solely by writing letters, but by simply refusing to pay his exorbant prices. If 300 people refused to pay 75¢ for GOLDEN AGE (which is worth no more than 40¢), then Mr. Love will have to lower his price if he wishes to continue publication.// I was glad to see that Howard Rogofsky's reply was as mature and appropriate as Danny Cassidy's accusation was unmature and unappropriate. The Academy is not a court but a council, it has no punitive powers. At most, we can only suggest a boycott if definite and irrefutable proof has been advanced and after both sides have been heard. Let us hope that as in this case, no such action will ever be necessary. ((Why the unknown letter was sent to me, and why no name was signed I don't know. I did believe that such a complaint deserved to be published.))

Tex Cox
4184 Nessel
Riverside, Calif.

Tho the news issue was not too long, the extra added attractions more than made up for this. About the best part was the "Open Letter to G.B. Love". I feel that every word that this unsigned person said is absolutely true, but he left out a few grievances.

cont. next page

Have you seen Golden Age #1? I'll admit it is a pretty good zine, but 75¢ when you consider that the cost of AE #7 was 50¢ and AE #8 was 60¢, and then you compare the quality, something is definitely wrong! This guy is making a mint. Have you ever stopped to estimate the money he brings in for one issue of ads alone in RB-CC? Quite a fabulous sum. I don't mind a guy making a profit, but "80% profit", I think that this is unfair. Definitely unfair.

Jay M. Kinney
606 Wellner Road
Naperville, Ill.

I think that the Academy should drop all of their current projects so as to consider a problem that is very real and is not to get better in the future. This is the image of comics...and comic fans. //I think that I am justified in making the generalization that most adults consider comic books as being cheap things for little kids which doesn't do any good and probably do lots of harm. This is a direct result of Werhtem's campaign against comics. Freddy refused to admit that comics influenced the thinking of millions of parents.//And by and large if fandom wants to grow, it will have to draw most new members from youngsters. Unlike adult members of fandom (Bails, Foss, you, etc.), most kids are partly or wholly dependant on their parents for money. And with the prejudice against comics floating around, it is tough going for us. Besides the parents, children are influenced by their school-mates to a very large extent. And most kids feel that they are too old for comics by age 13 or so. Which is in fact, the age at which they could really start to understand and enjoy comics. Both parents and friends frowning down on their interest is not too encouraging; and at the crucial "early" stage of their mature interest in comics, this may prove overpowering to many kids who are inclined to conform.//And without a set definition of the "Academy" parents indeed have a valid reason to wonder, "is the Academy a big front for a couple of smart guys who rake in the money from overpriced, old shreddy comics?"//When proposals are brought to the board that a list of standards should be drawn up for fanzines, it is too much. It smacks of the pilgrims coming to America to escape religious prejudice and then setting up their own strict rules.//Until fandom starts looking around for publicity and new members I think that we should start defining and clearing up a few matters. Then, and perhaps only then, will coverage in Newsweek, etc. be justified.

END

Alter Ego

Featuring: COMIC HEROES of the PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE!

Single copies of AE-9--75¢ (includes manila envelope!)
Subscription #9-12--only-$3.00

#9

FEATURE PRESENTATION: "SUPERMEN SOUTH" Part II by Fred Patten

An authoritative look at the highly original super-heroes of Mexico--including Supercharro, Relámpago, Neutrón, Santo, and others!

48 PAGES — WITH 4-COLOR COVER BY BILJO WHITE!

ALL PHOTO-OFFSET!

PLUS THESE EXCITING EXTRAS:

"Them Justice Guys--Part III" by Glen Johnson

"I, Robotman" by Roy Thomas

"A Visit to National" by John Fahey

"Superfan"--new strip

"Warrior of Llarn" by Ronn Foss and Roy Thomas--based on book by Gardner F. Fox

plus other smash features!!

Send to: Roy Thomas, 307 Greensferry Road, Jackson, Missouri

Mike Conroy
Rt 2, Box 3091
Carmel, Calif.
#37

FIRST CLASS Mail

Glen D. Johnson
Box 120
Crownpoint, N.M.